

THE "ALL-TRUE" LIBRARY

The MOB MASTER



BY
ERNEST H. HAYES

The All-True Library

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

By ERNEST H. HAYES.

' Truth is stranger than fiction '

THIS new Library of ' thrillers ' for boys and girls will prove the truth of this old wisecrack. The Library will show from the life-stories of real men and women, that thrilling adventure, hair-raising escapes, and doughty deeds of daring can be recorded from real life that leave the work of the imaginative writers of popular fiction far behind.

The following titles in this Library are issued or in course of preparation :

- (1) **THE MOB MASTER.**
- (2) **THE ' WHARF RAT ' VENTURE.**
- (3) **DRUM-SKIN TROPHY.**
- (4) **THE CHEESE-FACTOR'S VOW.**
- (5) **THE MAN WITH THE HAMMER.**
- (6) **PLOUGH-BOYS' CHAMPION.**
- (7) **THE PAUPER'S COFFIN.**
- (8) **GRIP OF ICE.**

*Price Twopence each (by post, 2½d.), or 2s. 2d. per dozen
assorted, post paid.*

THE MOB MASTER

By ERNEST H. HAYES

' Fire ! Fire ! '

' The rectory's afire ! '

The news spread through the quiet village of Epworth almost as rapidly as the flames ran along the old thatched roof of the rectory.

' I hope Mr. Wesley's children are all safe,' said one villager pantingly to a neighbour, as they rushed towards the scene of the blaze.

' There's enough of 'em to account for,' said the other man, grimly. As they reached the rectory garden the villagers saw that the house of their rector was well alight. The thatched roof and old timbers were burning like tinder, and the whole of the upper part of the house seemed wrapped in roaring flames.

Meanwhile, the rector himself was tearing about trying to make sure in the excitement and confusion that all his children were safely out of their burning home.

Suddenly there were loud cries of alarm from the watching villagers. At a bedroom window the little white face of a small boy appeared, beckoning and waving his arms in terror.

' It's little Jackie,' cried the rector in anguish, and dashed into the smoke-filled house. He reappeared almost immediately, gasping for breath and in great alarm.

'The staircase is like a furnace,' he cried, 'we must try the window.'

Fortunately it was a low-built, rambling old house, and one tall man, by climbing on the shoulders of another, was able to reach the sill of the window, and in a few minutes little Jackie was safe in his mother's arms.

'Only just in time,' said the rector, thankfully, as a few seconds later part of the roof of the old house fell in with a terrific crash and a rain of sparks.

Perhaps because he was under-sized and weakly, little Jackie had always been the special care of his mother. After the fire she often declared, 'He's a brand plucked from the burning.' He now became the object of her special prayers, for she believed that God had some great plan for his life after such a hair-breadth escape.

As a matter of fact, Jack had had a hard life from birth, for the rector had small means and a large family, Jack being the eleventh child of nineteen. But what the Wesleys lacked in home comforts was more than made up by sterling character, and the sound religious teaching they received from their parents. On their father's side there had been many eminent Nonconformist preachers, as well as a Crusader ancestor, while their mother came from a distinguished family of Presbyterian preachers.

Only eight of the nineteen children had survived their early years. Each child on his fifth birthday had the special treat of learning the alphabet and beginning

lessons ! Susanna Wesley ordered her life and the affairs of the family with machine-like precision. Sleep—lessons—play—meals—succeeded each other like clock-work—although the meals were fairly scanty!

* * - * *

The Nickname.

In those days Charterhouse School stood in the heart of London. One day a new boy caused much amusement by running right round the block of buildings once—twice—thrice. Then he came in to breakfast—panting.

‘What are you trying to do, Jack? Trying to make the school fall down, like the Israelites captured Jericho?’ scoffed one of his new friends.

The truth is that Jack Wesley had promised his father, when leaving the rectory at Epworth to go to Charterhouse, that he would run three times round the building every morning before breakfast to strengthen his weakly body. This form of physical training laid the foundations for a robust manhood, and all his life Jack was fond of athletics.

At seventeen Jack went to Oxford, at the age of twenty-one secured his B.A., and at twenty-four became a Fellow of his college. Ever a hard worker at his studies, he was yet ‘as fit as a fiddle,’ and could walk, swim or ride with anybody, and was in better training than most, because he believed in hard physical exercise and lived on the plainest diet.

One day at Oxford a simple event happened which

made a deep impression on Jack Wesley. A porter called at his rooms, and in fun Jack began to chaff him about his shabby clothes.

‘Go home and get another coat,’ said he.

‘This is the only coat I have in the world, and I thank God for it,’ was the man’s reply.

‘Go home and get your supper, then,’ taunted Jack.

‘I shall have nothing but water to drink, and I thank God for that,’ replied the porter.

‘It’s late, and you will be locked out ! Then what will you have to thank God for ?’ persisted Jack.

‘I will thank Him that I have the dry stones to lie on,’ said the man, with a grin.

‘John, you thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie on ; what else do you thank Him for ?’ asked Jack, now quite impressed.

‘I thank Him,’ said the porter, ‘that He has given me life, and a heart to love Him, and a desire to serve Him.’

That night Jack Wesley went to bed with new thoughts in his mind—he saw that the poor porter knew more about religion and God than he did. He made up his mind to discover the secret of the man’s faith and happiness.

From that day onwards Jack became a seeker after joyous religion. He began reading religious books and to spend hours in poring over his Bible. He tried giving up the amusements that led many of his fellow-students into temptation and trouble, and carefully

planned out his day's work in a methodical way, so that not a moment was lost.

One day he discovered that his brother Charles, who was also at Oxford, together with a few friends, had started a little society for prayer and Bible study, that had been nicknamed by other students, 'The Holy Club.' Jack joined this club gladly, hoping it would help him in his quest after joyous religion, and he soon became the head of it. His careful method of planning out his waking hours so that not a moment was wasted was adopted by all the Club members, and when this became known, a new nick-name was applied to the Holy Club—they were called 'Methodists.' It soon became clear that the club members took life seriously, for in addition to prayer and Bible study, they began to visit the sick, to care for orphans, and visit prisons to help the prisoners to 'turn over a new leaf.'

About this time Jack began an experiment to discover how many hours he was wasting by lying in bed after he was awake. He experimented with an alarm clock and rose first at seven, then at six, then at five—but still found that he was awake before the alarm sounded. Finally he discovered that in the ordinary way he enjoyed unbroken sleep till four o'clock. So from that time forward throughout his sixty years of life, he got up every morning at four a.m., and never wasted more valuable minutes lying awake in bed.

Before long the Holy Club, nicknamed Methodists, were forced to raise a fund to provide the medicine,

books, and money needed for helping the sick, the orphans, and the criminals. As leader of the Club, Jack Wesley felt that he must do his part in this, so out of a princely income of sixty pounds a year, he spent thirty-two pounds on this work. But still his religion was of the austere, stern and formal kind ; he had not yet discovered the secret of joy.

* * * *

The Adventure in Georgia.

After his father's death, Jack Wesley felt called to the work of a missionary to the new English settlements of that day in America. With him went his brother Charles, and two other members of the Holy Club. On the voyage out they determined to continue the Club meetings in the cabin of the ship. Among the passengers on board they discovered twenty-six Moravian exiles—men who had been driven from their home in Moravia because of their Protestant faith. In order to talk to these men, Wesley set to work to learn German and crowded his days with activity as before. His religion was still a joyless one, however.

Then came a great adventure that nearly cost John Wesley his life, but which helped him in his quest after joy in religion. While the ship was in mid-Atlantic, a great storm arose. The wooden vessel shivered under the pounding of the waves, which smashed the main-mast and threatened to engulf the ship. The sailors were in despair, the members of the Holy Club were in a state of terror—but the Moravians,

to the utter astonishment of Wesley, were singing hymns joyfully, for they were not afraid to die. As John watched these Moravian exiles, noting that even the women and children were not afraid, he realised that they had discovered the secret of faith and joy, and possessed a religion of the right sort. When at last the storm subsided, John studied German harder than ever, hoping to be able to talk with the Moravians and learn their secret. Meanwhile, he determined that there should be more joy and less gloom in the meetings of the Holy Club in the ship's cabin, and as a result they learned to sing hymns. To provide these, John translated some of the Moravian hymns into English, and, with some of Isaac Watts' hymns, compiled the first Methodist Hymnbook.

John spent two years in Georgia as a minister among the white settlers, for his original plan of becoming a missionary to the Indians proved unworkable. As a parish minister he was not very successful, for he had not yet learned the happy secret of the Oxford porter or of the Moravian exiles, and his religion was hard and narrow. At the same time, he really tried to live up to the teaching of Jesus. He opened a school for the children of the settlers, teaching them reading and the catechism. One day he found some of the better-clad boys jeering at certain poor boys who had had to come to school barefooted because they had no shoes. Next morning John Wesley walked into school without shoes, thus making himself one with the poorer boys. The better-clothed boys were so amazed at

seeing their bare-footed teacher that they were cured once for all of their snobbery.

When John Wesley returned to England he went to London to seek out the Moravians, still on his quest for joy in religion. There he met one of the leaders of the Moravian Church, Peter Bohler, and begged his help in the quest. After much argument, discussion and struggle with his doubts and fears, John Wesley was at last led to trust everything to God. He tells us that this is how it happened :

‘ In the evening (of May 24th, 1738) I went very unwillingly to the Society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I *did* trust in Christ.’

Bohler convinced him that salvation through Jesus Christ was for everyone who would believe, and that the joy of forgiveness of sin, and the peace of trust in God, could be had by anybody and at once, by just accepting God’s offer of salvation in Jesus Christ.

When John Wesley believed that, and preached it, he found to his great joy that it was a faith that worked. He discovered, too, that this message was what the people of England were hungering for. It was Whitsuntide when John Wesley made this great discovery that led him to a joyous, happy, free religion. His brother Charles had already made the discovery and experienced this joy of forgiveness in religion, and from

that point onwards both the Wesleys felt they had a message for the people of England.

* * * *

Good News for Everybody.

In the summer of 1738 John Wesley returned to England after a visit to the Moravian Christians in Germany, with his faith in free and full salvation and forgiveness greatly strengthened. Wherever he could get an opportunity to preach this good news in the churches he did so, but very soon he discovered that the churches of his time—both parish churches and the Nonconformist chapels—would not accept his message. The religious life of England in that day was at a very low ebb, for the Church had lost its power ; the services were formal and lifeless, and Christianity was more a matter of infant baptism, youthful confirmation, and of adult attendance at Communion, than trying to please God by living out the teaching of Jesus in everyday life. For some time, however, John Wesley tried preaching in the churches whenever he could. He still felt that it was impossible to preach to people or bring to them the joy of salvation anywhere else. But in many places he formed converts into Holy Clubs or, as they began to be called, Methodist Societies.

It was by mere accident, humanly speaking, that Wesley discovered his real life work. One of the original members of the Holy Club at Oxford was George Whitefield, who, after much wonderful success as a

preacher in Georgia, had returned to England with a message like Wesley's. Finding the churches closed to him and his message, Whitefield followed the example of our Lord by teaching and preaching outdoors, wherever people would gather to listen. Just outside Bristol, Whitefield preached to thousands of colliers, with remarkable results. Nearly 20,000 men had accepted the message of salvation, and became Christians. One day Whitefield wrote to Wesley, urging him to come down to Bristol to help him in this remarkable work. For some time Wesley hesitated, for he still felt that only in church could the Gospel be preached, but he finally went to Bristol. On the following Sunday, as he stood by Whitefield, he was amazed at the impression his friend made in that outdoor meeting. He was rather shocked at seeing people converted anywhere but in a church, but he could not deny the sight before his eyes.

Next day he agreed to preach in the open air, and 3,000 people gathered to hear him. Opening his Bible haphazard and looking for a text, as was his custom, John Wesley saw the words, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.' He preached with such power from that text that hundreds of people were converted.

This result surprised most people, but none more so than John Wesley himself. He had had grave misgivings as to whether it was right to preach anywhere but in a pulpit, and it had demanded great courage to preach outdoors at all.

' I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way,' he tells us, ' having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.'

From that point a new career opened for Wesley. He preached outdoors at other places to help his friend Whitefield, and soon felt compelled to preach on his own account. Fourteen thousand people assembled one day to hear his message on Blackheath, near London. On the Sunday following, seven thousand people gathered at Moorfields for an outdoor service, and in the evening fifteen thousand on Kennington Common.

Then, like a flaming fire, a great revival of religion began to spread throughout the length and breadth of England. John Wesley, together with his brother Charles and George Whitefield, spread the fire wherever they went. A huge disused government foundry in Finsbury was converted into a chapel capable of seating a thousand people, and this soon became Wesley's home and headquarters.

Unfortunately, the bishops and clergy of the day were violently opposed to this preaching work that was sweeping through great centres of the population, but outside the churches. A violent persecution broke out against Wesley and his helpers, engineered by the clergy, the squires, the churchwardens, and others. Attempts were made to break up Wesley's meetings,

which sometimes ended in a riot, with Wesley being beaten and ill-treated. Yet nothing could deter him from going on preaching and winning men for Jesus Christ.

* * * *

Facing the Mob.

Several times his life was in danger, but the Spirit of God was plainly on his side. At Cole-Orton Moor, the squire, who had great influence over the colliers of the district, bribed a number of them with strong drink to break up Wesley's meeting. He armed them with truncheons, and placed them under the leadership of a local pugilist, John Massey. With their truncheons hidden under their clothes, Massey's men attended the meeting in force, and waited for their leader's signal to break up the meeting and attack the preacher. But as the prize-fighter listened to the Gospel message, the Spirit of God so worked in his heart that he became converted. At last his men became impatient, and one of them called out,

‘ John, why don't you give the word of command ? ’

‘ If any man touches the preacher I'll reckon with him tomorrow morning up on the pit bank,’ was the amazing reply from the pugilist. After that no one dared to interrupt the service, and as a result of it the prize-fighter became a preacher of the Gospel.

Throughout this period of his life the open-air preaching of John Wesley became a dangerous adventure : mobs gathered and threatened to kill the

preacher by stoning him. Through all these encounters he came out unharmed, chiefly because of his unflinching courage and his sure sense of the presence of God with him.

Once in Falmouth a yelling mob surrounded the house in which he was staying.

'Bring out the Methodist !' 'Bring out the Methodist !' they chanted.

No heed was taken of this clamour, so the door was savagely broken in, and the second barrier, a thin wooden partition, was attacked. It was only a matter of moments before it would give way under the assault of the mob, and a young girl in the house cried out to Wesley in fear : 'Oh, sir, what must we do ?'

'We must pray,' said Wesley.

'But, sir, is it not better for you to hide yourself ?'

'No, it is better for me to stand just where I am,' was the cool reply.

The partition soon fell, and Wesley stepped boldly forward.

'Here I am,' he said. 'Which of you has anything to say to me ? To which of you have I done any wrong ? To you ? Or you ? Or you ?'

As he talked he passed slowly through the mob into the street, and there, raising his voice, cried :

'Neighbours, countrymen ! Do you desire to hear me speak ?'

'Yes ! Yes !' some of the crowd shouted. In a few moments the raging mob was silent and Wesley had won his battle.

One day at Wednesbury, Wesley was in danger of his life from another mob, led by a big prize-fighter named 'Honest Munchin.' Wesley's courage won Munchin's heart, and the bully said :

' Sir, I will spend my life for you ! Follow me ; and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head ! '

From that day Munchin gave up his evil life, for he realised that God had acted in saving Wesley from harm that day.

Another famous convert was John Nelson, a Yorkshire stonemason, who heard Wesley preach in Moorfields and, as a result, gained the peace he wanted. When he returned home a changed man, people said he was mad, and his wife was ashamed of him ; but all had to admit he was a better man. He made it his business to tell his good news to ignorant, drinking, swearing people in the villages around Leeds and Bradford who wanted to live better lives.

These two men are examples of the good work that Wesley did for thousands.

* * * *

The Work Goes On.

One day John Wesley started out for Newcastle—by road, of course—determined to rouse that city to its need of God, and to found one of his societies there. After bravely overcoming many obstacles he reached the city, and was shocked at what he calls 'its terrible wickedness.' Soon large numbers of the miners were converted under his preaching. He

thereupon determined to build a chapel in which his converts could meet regularly. On the day that he laid the first stone of the building, which would cost £700, only twenty-six shillings of this money was in hand. And as Wesley's converts were very poor, people laughed at the preacher's foolishness.

'You will never see the roof-timbers put on this building,' said one scoffer.

'I was of another mind,' said Wesley afterwards, 'nothing doubting that, as it was begun for God's sake, He would provide what was needful for the finishing of it.'

'Great is thy faith,' said a Quaker who was present at the stonelaying. He backed up his admiration by sending £100 to the preacher. Within three months Wesley preached in the chapel, which was not merely roofed in, but furnished for worship. So eager were the colliers to hear Wesley that after the morning sermon they would sleep on the benches until the evening service !

So the work spread from city to city, and Wesley formed his societies all over England. 'I look upon all the world as my parish,' he declared on one occasion.

At Bristol, where several of his societies existed, a heavy debt remained on the 'preaching house,' as it was called. This led one of the members, Captain Foy, to get up at a meeting and suggest that every member should pay one penny a week until the debt was cleared.

'Many can't afford that,' someone objected. The captain, however, was prepared to brush aside all objections.

‘ Then put eleven of the poorest with me ! ’ he replied. ‘ I will call on each of them weekly. If all pay, well—if not, I will make it good.’

The idea caught on. The captain persuaded other members to look after eleven of their neighbours’ weekly payments. The result was that the collector from the twelve was soon called a ‘ leader,’ and the dozen members became his ‘ class,’ and he looked after their spiritual welfare.

‘ This is the very thing we have wanted for so long.’ cried Wesley with joy, when he heard of the arrangement. Thereafter ‘ class leaders ’ and their members and penny-a-week payments, became a regular feature of Wesley’s societies, with great benefit to all.

Until his death in 1791, Wesley went on his Gospel travels round England. He usually rose at four o’clock in the morning, sometimes delivering as many as four sermons in a day. Usually he would ride fifty or sixty miles on his horse between sunrise and sunset. When travelling alone, he would toss the reins on his horse’s neck and read a book of history or poetry.

Those who learned a new way of life from him formed themselves, under his guidance, into societies and classes, and from them came the Methodist Church of to-day. It was never his wish to form a new church, but he was driven to that course through the opposition of the bishops and clergy of his day.

‘ Church or no church, the people must be saved,’ he declared. That will serve as a motto for all who seek real adventure in life.

THE PIONEER SERIES

**A Library of Graphic and Concise
Biography**

By **ERNEST H. HAYES.**

- No. 1. WILIAMU : Mariner-Missionary**
The epic story of John Williams in the South Seas.
- No. 2. DAVID JONES : Dauntless Pioneer**
A story of thrilling adventure in Madagascar.
- No. 3. DOCTOR PENNELL : Afghan Pioneer**
Adventurous Medical Pioneering on the Indian Frontier.
- No. 4. ROBERT MORRISON : China's Pioneer**
A stirring story of thrilling adventure in China.
- No. 5. MACKAY THE ROADMAKER**
The achievements of an Engineer in Uganda.
- No. 6. GRENFELL : The Labrador Pioneer**
Facing Storm and Peril on Sea and Land.
- No. 7. COMBER : The Congo Pioneer**
A thrilling story of Unknown Africa.
- No. 8. SAM POLLARD OF YUNNAN**
Adventurous pioneering among the Miao in South-West China.
- No. 9. CHALMERS OF PAPUA.**
The story of the New Guinea Pioneer.
- No. 10. RAIKES THE PIONEER**
The Rise and Romance of a Popular Movement.

1/6 each, cloth boards. 1/- paper.

Obtainable through all Booksellers, or the Publishers
of this Library.



THE LEAGUE OF LIGHT

By joining the League of Light you would be helping the National Children's Home to bring brightness into lives that have been clouded with sorrow and misfortune. Full particulars of the League of Light are given in a booklet entitled "The Ray of Light."

Please send for a copy to-day.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME

(Founded by Dr. Stephenson, 1869)

Chief Offices : Highbury Park, London, N.5.